

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. 102(a) and 103(a)

Applicant amends the independent claims herein and cancels some claims to advance prosecution but continues to note that the present invention was conceived prior to the earliest priority date of the cited prior art. Documentary evidence and related affidavit by Applicant were submitted under separate cover previously. Evidence of diligence was inadvertently omitted in the previous response but is provided herein. In summary: On May 16, 2000, outside counsel was asked to perform a patentability search on the invention. On July 16, 2000, outside counsel forwarded the search results to Applicant's representative. Following a review of the prior art, outside counsel was asked on August 28, 2000 to prepare a patent application based on the original disclosure. Outside counsel sent a first draft patent application to Applicant on September 6, 2000. A final patent application draft and blank filing documents were sent by outside counsel on September 11, 2000. Applicant signed the oath and an assignment on October 19, 2000. Executed filing documents were forwarded to outside counsel on January 3, 2001, and the application was filed on January 4, 2001.

All pending claims are believed to be allowable as amended. The prior art made of record and not relied upon has been carefully reviewed. The Examiner is invited to call Applicants' undersigned representative if a telephone conference will expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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